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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

September 18, 2015

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BSHSB
Public Safety
911

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

As we're sure you will agree, it is the paramount obligation of the federal government to provide for the common defense. It is in that vein that we write to share with you our objections to proposals under consideration by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to permit the "E911" emergency response system to use the Russian Federation's GLONASS system. From our positions as Chairman and Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, we have serious concerns about this proposal and the threat it poses to U.S. national security.

As you may know, one of us wrote to the Secretary of Defense and the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) on January 21, 2015, sharing concerns regarding this proposal and asking a series of questions. We have recently received the classified response of the DNI stating his position on the proposal. Having reviewed that response and the detailed analysis provided by the DNI, we write today to ask that the Commission end its consideration of any proposal that would create reliance on the undependable GLONASS system or dependency on any system in the control of the kleptocracy run by Russia's Vladimir Putin. We urge you to obtain the Director's classified response and ensure that the full Commission is briefed on it and other related classified threat briefings.

Further, we request that you immediately direct the FCC (together with the Department of Defense and the Director of National Intelligence) to investigate (including through hardware and software testing) whether there is an alternative technological approach that would achieve similar improvements to emergency response efforts but that would not create the same risks as relying on the Russian Federation or GLONASS. We ask that the Commission also evaluate whether it should promulgate a policy to ensure that future generations of personal

Chairman Wheeler
September 10, 2015
Page 2

communications devices do not include GLONASS chipsets or other technology from other likely adversaries.

You have likely seen press reports on the "hack" by the Russian Federation on the unclassified networks of the U.S. military's Joint Staff. We ask that you consider what message would be sent by the FCC agreeing to rely on the Russian GLONASS system after such actions. Surely, you agree that the FCC cannot allow itself to be used to undermine U.S. foreign policy with respect to Putin's Russia, nor should it create new national security vulnerabilities or risks that play into that country's hands.



Mike Rogers
Chairman
Strategic Forces Subcommittee

Sincerely,



Jim Cooper
Ranking Member
Strategic Forces Subcommittee

CC: Commissioner Mignon Clyburn, Federal Communications Commission
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel, Federal Communications Commission
Commissioner Ajit Pai, Federal Communications Commission
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly, Federal Communications Commission
Assistant Secretary Lawrence E. Strickling, National Telecommunications & Information Administration
The Honorable Ashton Carter, Secretary of Defense
General James Clapper, Director of National Intelligence



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

November 10, 2015

The Honorable Mike D. Rogers
Chairman
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
2340 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers:

I have received your letter of September 18, 2015, regarding the potential use of GLONASS to enhance 911 location accuracy. The authorizing statute of the FCC, the Communications Act of 1934, highlights that two of the purposes for the establishment of the Commission are support for "the national defense" and "promoting the safety of life and property through the use of wire and radio communication." As Chairman, I take these responsibilities very seriously.

I have reached out to Director Clapper to get a better understanding of the intelligence community's concerns about the use of GLONASS signals in addition to GPS signals for 911 location purposes. We will work closely with our federal partners, including the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the Department of Defense, in assessing available technological approaches to improving emergency response efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Tom Wheeler", is written over a horizontal line.

Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

November 10, 2015

The Honorable Jim Cooper
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
2340 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

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